MINERVA TEICHERT’S JESUS AT THE HOME OF MARY AND MARTHA:
REIMAGINING AN ORDINARY HEROINE

by

Tina M. Delis
A Thesis Project
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Arts
Art History

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Date:  Spring Semester 2015
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Minerva Teichert’s Jesus at the Home of Mary and Martha: Reimagining an Ordinary Heroine

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Bachelor of Arts
George Mason University, 1987

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DEDICATION

For Jim, who teaches me every day that anything is possible if you have the courage to take the first step.
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I would like to thank the many friends, relatives, and supporters who have made this happen. To begin with, Dr. Ellen Wiley Todd and Dr. Angela Ho who with great patience, spent many hours reading and editing several drafts to ensure I composed something I would personally be proud of. In addition, the faculty in the Art History program whose courses contributed to small building blocks for the overall project. Dr. Marian Wardle for sharing insights about her grandmother. Lastly, to my family who supported me in more ways than I could ever list.
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ABSTRACT

MINERVA TEICHERT’S JESUS AT THE HOME OF MARY AND MARTHA: REIMAGINING AN ORDINARY HEROINE

Tina M. Delis, M.A.
George Mason University, 2015
Thesis Project Director: Dr. Ellen Wiley Todd

This thesis discusses the artist Minerva Kohlhepp Teichert (1888-1976), an early 20th century American Western muralist. It traces her scholarship from her lifetime forward. Examining Teichert’s biography and formal art education the research establishes how her trademark style is solidified early in her art career. Using Teichert’s painting, Jesus at the Home of Mary and Martha, the paper instructs how to read Teichert’s painting technique and interpret her personal message of re-envisioning the traditional narrative of Mary as the heroine. Two theories are presented to explain why Teichert would be motivated to paint Mary and Martha as equals. First, a market analysis is conducted to trace the trajectory of Teichert’s artistic production, the subjects she chose to paint and the art market—the selling, buying and her patronage—to show Minerva’s reliance on a collective effort of women that ensured her success at key moments in her career. Second, analyzing two murals she painted in the LDS Manti Utah Temple presents an argument that she was interested in depicting ordinary people as heroes in history.
MINERVA TEICHERT’S JESUS AT THE HOME OF MARY AND MARTHA: REIMAGINING AN ORDINARY HEROINE

“There are only two reasons for painting in the first place,
either a thing must be very beautiful or it must be an important story.”

~Minerva Teichert

1 Minerva Teichert quoted in Richard Oman and Susan Oman, “Minerva Kohlepp Teichert: (1889-1976),” Special Collections, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, 10.
INTRODUCING MINERVA TEICHERT

“I must paint...It’s a disease.”

~Minerva Teichert²

In the introduction to Independent Spirits: Women Painters of the American West, 1890-1945 Virginia Scharff asks, “What must women have in order to create art?” To answer her own question, she begins by first outlining what all artists need, “They need food and shelter. They must have tools and materials and training. They require some time to themselves and some human support. They have to have a source of inspiration, something worth making art about. And, not insignificantly, their right to express themselves must be recognized by somebody who matters.”³ Continuing, Scharff contends, “Women never have been able to count on any of these things and have achieved them through immense conscious, sometimes collective effort. They must also be able to turn disruptive life changes into chances.”⁴ Scharff’s introduction is a constructive approach to researching the constraints on women artists who lived and painted in the western frontier of the United States, but the author rightly claims that these women artists succeeded because they could see beyond their particular restrictions.

Minerva Kohlepp Teichert (1888-1976), an early 20th century American Western muralist who was trained as an artist at both The Art Institute of Chicago and The Art Students League of

⁴ Scharff, 2.
New York, falls within Scharff’s synopsis of women artists. Her personality, self-determination and choices, reveal a woman who was able to transform her life into one of artistic opportunities. Not only did the source of her inspiration come from her beliefs as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormon Church), she knew her subject matter was worth recording. And through collective efforts of a supportive network of women she was “found” by and collaborated with Alice Merrill Horne who helped ensure her success.

Painting during an age when many women artists’ subjects were narrowed by their gender, Teichert, living in a remote city in Wyoming, without societal constraints, chose to counter the traditional role of women artists by creating compositions that revealed an artist who not only believed women deserved to be the heroines in a retelling of America’s historical narrative, but also claimed their domestic lives should not be ignored. Balancing her home life, religious beliefs and career, Teichert’s voice and opinion resound throughout her artwork. Her works reflect an artist with a strong distinctive personality whose political and cultural beliefs can be easily read when looking at her paintings. By researching the trajectory of her artistic production the subjects she chose to paint, and the art market—the selling, buying and her patronage—this study uncovers Minerva’s reliance on a collective effort of women that ensured her success at key moments in her career. These women helped her to acquire the time, the means, the focus and the audience she needed to achieve the success she had during her lifetime.

This paper will discuss scholarship written about Teichert. It will research her biography and art education to identify how it solidifies her artistic style. Focusing on Teichert’s painting, *Jesus at the home of Mary and Martha*, I will argue that one of Teichert’s primary goals was to teach through her artwork, pay tribute to the women who supported her and elevate ordinary societal roles of women as extraordinary.
During Teichert’s lifetime most published work about her was found in newspaper articles advertising exhibitions for her artwork while generally arguing that this work was an extension of her beliefs, convictions and experiences. It was not until after her death that more extensive scholarship began to appear. I use Teichert’s biography in much of the research because her art production was so closely interrelated with her personal life.

Richard Oman, a prominent LDS art historian, writes two significant articles about Minerva Teichert. First, in a posthumous piece for the Ensign magazine, Oman uses Teichert’s biography as a basis for evaluation and relies heavily on interviews he conducted with family members. Oman begins by comparing Teichert’s stylistic technique to another leading Utah male artist, C.C.A. Christensen (1831-1912). Both artists are described as storytellers who painted landscapes that created stages for stories. He argues that the unfinished action of a particular scene is meant for the viewer to imagine the ending. Teichert’s Washday on the Plains (fig. 1) and C.C.A. Christensen’s Handcart Pioneers (fig. 2) demonstrate Oman’s analysis.

Teichert’s Washday on the Plains is a representation of a snippet of time in a woman’s day on the Pioneer trek. These women are in the act of doing laundry, yet the viewer does not know where on the Plains they group is located. The bright white sheets create a stage-like curtain framing the composition highlighting the women familial chores. In contrast, C.C.A. Christensen’s composition has numerous pioneer families contouring the frontier accomplishing many different tasks. The narrative is comprised of several different tales, from the family creating a fire in the

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5 Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 6, folder 5 and 6.
6 Richard Oman and Susan Oman, transcription interviews with Minerva Teichert’s family members, Special Collections, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.
8 Oman, “A Passion for Painting,” 58.
lower left hand corner to the family crossing the river to the approaching Indians in the center background.

In his second article, Oman delves deeper into analyzing Teichert’s art and examines her ability to transform a story’s narrative from the male dominated genre to a female’s point of view. Rather than painting the vast Western landscape, Oman suggests that heroism for Teichert revolved around the daily tasks society could not function without.\(^9\) Teichert acknowledges women’s contribution to the settling of the Western frontier by inserting them as a focal point in the narrative. Oman asserts for this the reason she can be considered a “feminist and social thinker who sought to raise the level of respect for daily toil especially when it was done by women.”\(^10\) He continues by arguing that her technique came from her time studying under Robert Henri (1865-1929) and the “Ashcan School,” but instead of creating their typically somber images her scenes are “bright and buoyant…western rather than eastern; rural rather than urban; rooted in the past as well as the present.”\(^11\) For the first time, it appears, Oman puts Teichert’s artwork in context with gender issues, albeit situating her under other male LDS artists of her day and her male mentor.

In addition to articles, Teichert’s biography is used as basis for evaluation in retrospective exhibitions. *Masterworks*, an exhibition curated by the Museum of Church History and Art in 1984 highlighted artworks primarily done by Latter-day Saints during the years of 1840’s to 1940’s. The authors argue that although most of the works are made in Utah, they should not be considered isolated since many of the artists consistently followed national and international

\(^9\) Richard Oman and Susan Oman, “Minerva Kohlhepp Teichert: (1889-1976),” Special Collections, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, 11.
contemporary art trends. This exhibition puts Teichert into historical context with other well-known LDS artists. Teichert is noted as using a “subject-oriented approach” with a stylistic technique that is “limited” but should not be viewed as “deterrent” because it was attributed to Minerva’s “lack of time” and her ability comes from being able to “emphasize the basic underlying structure of form.” While this analysis helps to put Teichert’s art into the context of its period, it may also suggest that the audience in the 1980’s does not fully understand Teichert’s style largely because research on Teichert had not yet been very extensive.

The Museum of Church History and Art includes Teichert in their book, *Images of Faith: Art of the Latter-Day Saints* published in 1995. Using a visual format, the book traces the development of the art tradition from the formation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1830. Teichert appears in the chapter discussing the development of a regional art for Latter-day Saint artwork between the years 1925-1965. In the essay written by Robert O. Davis, the author maintains Teichert’s biography is the foundation of her artwork. Using paintings owned by the museum he interjects biographical facts that explained a particular work. For example, Davis acknowledges that *Madonna of 1847* (fig #3), was one of her finest works, and that one of her motivations for painting pioneer images emerged from her deep appreciation for her own pioneer heritage. As evidence he cites the figures in the painting as her family members, to connect Teichert with the historical narrative. Using a religious lens Davis points out that the painting *First Plowing* (fig #4) should be interpreted as a sacred image. The summary states, “The first plowing and planting in the Salt Lake Valley becomes a religious

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12 *Masterworks*, “Introduction,” (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1984), exhibition catalog, 1.
act...Heads of both men and beasts are bowed as if in prayer, and the seagulls, a symbol of God’s
goodness, hover above in seeming blessing. In this sacred scene, the temporal acts of farming are
interpreted as spiritual contributions to building the kingdom.”\(^{16}\) Moreover, Davis asserts that
Teichert’s powerful boldness in her active subjects and style sets her apart from other female artists of the period who painted still lifes and landscapes.\(^{17}\)

More recent art history moves beyond biography to provide a wider context for the
artist’s motivation and considers historical issues apart from intent. In 2007, Marion Wardle,
curator of the Brigham Young Museum of Art, curated one of the largest exhibitions of Minerva
Teichert’s oeuvre. In her book, *Minerva Teichert: Pageants in Paint*, Wardle positions Teichert’s artwork within the cultural and social context that influenced her stylistic trademark. She uses Teichert’s biography to help readers understand the historical context of artwork by interweaving both the cultural and the personal.\(^{18}\) Wardle specifically analyzes how Teichert’s biography intersected with her stylistic trademark technique of mural production, which draws upon pageantry formats, and cinematic staging. Additionally, because pageantry was celebrated as a teaching tool in American contemporary culture of the time, Teichert combines both mural painting and pageantry as parallel teaching tools in her artwork.\(^{19}\) Wardle notes that Teichert’s lack of stylistic change from her initial art education is most likely due to her living in a rural community, her focus on raising her five children and helping her husband on the ranch. Such conditions provided only limited contact with new art forms and caused her artistic style to be solidified during her formal years of art education.\(^{20}\) Rather than relying fully on Teichert’s

\(^{16}\) Davis, “Developing a Regional,” 75.
\(^{17}\) Davis, “Developing a Regional,” 75.
\(^{19}\) Wardle, *Pageants in Paint*, 11.
biography, Wardle uses Teichert’s education to explain how it formulates the artist’s overall painting style.

While Wardle positions Teichert and her work within a particular aesthetic, cultural and social context, Erika Doss situates her among other leading Western female artists. In the 1995 book *Independent Spirits: Women Painters of the American West, 1890-1945* Doss positions Teichert in the Rocky Mountain region with other prominent women artists. The objective of the book is to discuss the roles of women in Western history and its development while introducing women artists into the historiography of the American West.\(^{21}\) It argues from a positive perspective that because the West was a space unconstrained by tradition and social strata, it allowed women the freedom to push the boundaries, especially in art production, even as women artists were still excluded from art history.\(^{22}\) When looking at Teichert’s pioneer images Doss asserts that women are rendered with “almost superhuman strength and endurance of thousands of Western women.”\(^{23}\) Doss acknowledges that Teichert’s insertion of women in the narrative both empowers them and recognizes their participation in Western history. She continues by stating that Teichert’s “artistic efforts were especially directed toward reimagining that resounding patriarchal religion and challenging the overtly masculine cast of the frontier myth…Consistently, the ‘great Mormon story’ that Teichert told was that of the strength and perseverance of Mormon women, the pioneers and homesteaders who also built Utah’s ‘mountain empire.’”\(^{24}\) When looking at Teichert’s *Zion Ho! (Handcart Pioneers)* (fig. #5) painted in 1935 the analysis Doss gives becomes clear. Teichert celebrates the role women played in Western history. Three

\(^{22}\) Trenton, “Introduction and Acknowledgment,” xi.
\(^{24}\) Doss, “I Must Paint,” 240.
figures stand at the edge of the Salt Lake Valley. The young boy and male figure are depicted with their backs to the viewer. Yet it is the female figure that stands facing the viewer with one hand extended waving encouragement to her trail-weary companies while her other hand holds the handcart to help push it forward. The woman with a heroic expression wears a dress with a bird-of-paradise motif that is noted as similar to Teichert’s great grandmother’s who died in 1846 at Winter Quarters.25 The red scarf encircles the woman highlighting her significance in the story. Her scarf and the yellow horizon help signify the energetic triumphal entry of the small family grouping. Teichert transforms the mythic Western narrative away from the heroic male announcing that equally heroic women played a significant role in building the frontier.

25 Davis, “Developing a Regional,” 73.
EDUCATING THROUGH MURALS

“The decoration in a building which belongs to the public
must speak to people—to the man in the street.
It must embody thought and significance, and that so plainly
that he who runs may read.”

~Edwin Blashfield

Teichert was born Minerva Bernetta Kohlhepp on August 28, 1888 in North Ogden, Utah, the second child to Fredrick John Kohlepp and Ella Hickman Kohlhepp. Her father was the son of a prosperous Boston businessman. While Fredrick was traveling through Utah he met Ella Hickman, fell in love, converted to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and married Ella. Both Minerva’s parents encouraged her imagination. Her father read aloud history books and literary classics to the family in the evenings. Her mother wrote readers for Teichert and her sisters. Remembering her youth, Teichert affirms, “My parents were dreamers. They were congenial in their tastes. At night while Mother sewed and mended, father, read. Oh, the fairyland we lived in.”

26 Edwin Blashfield quoted in Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 182.
27 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 180, see Robert S. Olpin, Dictionary of Utah Art (Salt Lake City, Utah: Salt Lake City Art Center, 1980), 249.
28 Laurie Teichert Eastwood, “My Mother—Minerva Kohlhepp Teichert: Events of Her Life as She Told Them to Me,” The Art of Minerva Kohlhepp Teichert: March 18-October 10, 1988, (Salt Lake City, Utah: Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1988), 1, exhibition catalog.
30 Eastwood, quoted from “My Mother,” 1, see Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 180.
Minerva had strong-minded female examples to follow. Ella was a suffragist and wrote pamphlets to further the cause for women in Idaho.31 Her maternal grandmother, Minerva Wade Hickman for whom she was named, divorced her polygamist husband and supported her family as a midwife. Hickman joined the church while living in New York and followed the pioneer Saints on foot to Utah. For a couple of years Teichert lived with her grandmother in North Ogden, Utah until she graduated from eighth grade and she recalled listening to stories about her grandmother’s pioneer life. One in particular tells how Hickman, left alone as a teenager, was forced to bury her mother in the frozen ground along the pioneer trail at Council Bluffs, Iowa before reaching Utah.32 Teichert’s admiration and love for her pioneer heritage can be traced back to these stories.33

Teichert’s biography reveals that she was a resourceful, industrious, self-confident and determined individual. Throughout Teichert’s life it is evident she was a hard working individual whose personal talents assisted with earning necessary funds for her education, after she married, and when finances were low for her family. At the age of fourteen she moved with her two siblings, Frederick and Eda, to Pocatello into a house their mother purchased. In early examples of entrepreneurship, she supported herself and siblings by drawing and selling Gibson Girl heads on silk.34 After graduating from Pocatello High School she began a career as a schoolteacher and assisted her family financially while her father served a LDS mission.35 In between courses she would return to Idaho with her siblings to do odd jobs and teaching during the off-season.36

31 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 180.
32 Eastwood, “My Mother,” 1-2, see Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 180.
33 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 180.
34 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 181, see Eastwood, “My Mother,” 3.
35 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 181.
36 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 181.
While studying in New York, to supplement her scholarships, she drew cadavers for medical students and worked as a trick roper and Western dancer with a New York entertainment group. In 1915 while Teichert studied under Robert Henri at the Art Students League of New York her self-confidence in her artistic skill is demonstrated by her first interaction with him. In her 1937 autobiographical sketch she recounted the episode:

> When I really caught the gist of his argument, I realized that all the other students were grouped in a worshipful attitude about the master—Henri. They were drinking in every word. Being a practical western woman, I was disgusted and expressed myself so. Since I alone of that vast class left at my easel. I said, “Yes, Mr. Henri, I’ve been living according to those Sunday School lessons all my life. What I’d like to know, since I came nearly three thousand miles to study under you, is—am I profiting by your counsel? How will you know unless you drop the lecture system and look at my work?”

> If a bomb had been dropped in that room it couldn’t have made a worse disturbance. Henri was visibly white with anger and the students, especially League members, in a rage. I did just what I would do—went right ahead with my work. That evening, Lahey, League president, came at the close of class and told me the League members of the class had agreed that I must apologize to Mr. Henri or they would have to ask that I leave school. I answered, “I will not. I did not come three thousand miles to study under him…He told you were nothing but a bunch of sheep looking for someone to lead you and it’s all you are!” By now I was angry, too, and flew out of the room in righteous indignation. I knew that action would have to be taken against me by the League directors so I determined to stay until formal notice was given of my dismissal.

> When I went back the next day I was the most unpopular little girl in New York. I had been crowded out of my place…I decided to fight it out…I worked with fury. I had a prayer in my heart. Maybe I was still angry. However, I did the best thing I had ever done, big strokes, bright color, even swing…

> Not until the next Tuesday did Mr. H. show up. He came straight to me. “Great!” He exclaimed, “That’s the way to paint folks. This girl has the idea.” …It’s needless to say I was reinstated.

Teichert’s artistic force and confidence must have impressed Henri because he was later noted as stating, “George Bellows, John Sloan, and Minerva Teichert—these are my bets. In this class of 150 I can count on the fingers of one hand those you’ll ever hear from, but this girl from Utah

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37 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 181.
you’re bound to hear from. She paints with great intelligence.”³⁹ Henri was Teichert’s mentor, but the two became lifelong friends. After returning to Idaho permanently Teichert sent canvases to Henri for critiques.⁴⁰ Their close relationship motivated Teichert to name one of her sons Robert Henri Teichert.⁴¹ It was through Henri’s urging that Teichert confirmed her motivation to paint Mormon history. Henri asked Teichert, “Has anyone ever told your great Mormon story?” Teichert answered, “Not to suit me.” His reply was “Good heavens, girl, what a chance. You do it. You’re the one…That’s your birthright. You feel it. You’ll do well.”⁴²

Fundamentally, Teichert’s self-confidence and her determination also ensured she would shape a life that suited her ambitions. An example is her courtship and marriage to Herman Adolph Teichert. Herman was a rancher from Sterling, Idaho and not a member of her faith. When they first met in about 1910, Teichert recorded in her autobiography that she “fell quite in love with a young country boy near Soda.”⁴³ Teichert and Herman had a long courtship over the next several years. During this period she studied in both Chicago and New York. Teichert’s family did not want her to marry outside her faith. In hopes of dissuading the young artist from marrying Herman her mother financed her tuition to study in New York.⁴⁴ Although Teichert thoroughly enjoyed her experience in New York as a student, she felt compelled to return to the West, especially for Herman.⁴⁵

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⁴⁰ See Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 2, folder 9, letter dated September 12, 1916.
Teichert records in 1937 in her autobiography an occasion where she attended a New York banquet as her fellow student Sid L. Hydeman’s (1895-1981) partner. She states she wore a “foolish little dress—very low-neck and lined with red. It was also a dress to show my figure to advantage, the sort of thing we Latter-Day-Saints don’t do very much.”

Mingling among socialites she was a success, but found herself yearning for the Idaho landscape and for a cattleman. One Sunday while attending a church service at a chapel in Harlem, an older woman addressed the young women questioning, “Girls, what is a career?” Continuing she states, “I have known the joy of motherhood. You go home and marry your sweethearts and have your families you will be much happier than you will be following a career.”

Teichert internalized these words and prepared to return home. After returning to Idaho in 1917 when it became clear that she and Herman were in love, Teichert was again offered financial support from a wealthy relative to study at the Royal Academy in London. Teichert declined the offer and married Herman on a day’s notice after he announced his enlistment into the United States Army in World War I.

Art was secondary to the love of her life. Even years later, in the summer of 1924 when Robert Henri and his wife invited Teichert to travel to England and Spain, she declined after dreaming that she gave birth to a future daughter.

Years later when questioned about her relationship with Herman she replied, “Herman has always given me a free reign to do what I please and so I try [sic] to please him, which I probably would not do if he were to ‘manage’ me.”

51 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 186.
52 Marian Wardle, interviewed by Tina Delis, September 22, 2014, see Davis, quoted in “I Must Paint,” 36.
Teichert’s formal art education began in 1909, yet her interest in art began as a child. She would spend time sketching horses and cattle on the family homestead. In the summer of 1903, Teichert was hired as a nursemaid to the Sparks family from American Falls, Idaho and traveled with them to San Francisco. While living there she took Saturday courses at the Mark Hopkins School of Art. After moving back to Idaho she was advised by C.R. Savage (1832-1909), one of Utah’s well-known photographers, to pursue art studies in Chicago. During the years of 1909-1912 Teichert studied at the Art Institute of Chicago. Her interest in mural decoration began under the tutelage of the American draftsman, John H. Vanderpool (1857-1911) and muralist Edwin Blashfield (1848-1936). When funding ran out, Teichert would return to Idaho to save money until she had enough to return and finish her studies. In 1915 her mother lent Teichert money to study at the Art Students League. While in New York she studied mural decoration under Kenneth Hayes Miller (1876-1952) and took classes with Dimitri Romanosffski (1886-1971) and George Bridman (1865-1943), who awarded Teichert a scholarship to study under Robert Henri (1865-1929).

Although Teichert had limited finances she immersed herself in both her studies and the social aspect the education presented to her. In her autobiography she suggested that although no one gave money to the [Arts] League because the “artists are afraid of them gaining controlling influence,” the wealthy donated theatre and opera tickets for the use of students. Because

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53 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 26.
54 Eastwood, “My Mother,” 3, see Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 181.
56 Eastwood, “My Mother,” 4, see Olpin, Dictionary of Utah Art, 249.
57 Eastwood, “My Mother,” 4, see Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 181-2.
58 Eastwood, “My Mother,” 4, see Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 182.
59 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 183.
60 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 183.
Minerva “was one of the most advanced students I had many [tickets].” She recalled seeing Polish pianist Igancy Jan Paderewski (1860-1941) and hearing Enrico Caruso (1873-1921) sing at the Metropolitan Opera. She visited art museums and art shows with her roommate, Marie Clark, a drama student at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, from Provo, Utah. She associated with other LDS girls studying in New York. Three of them were Emma Lucy Gates, Brigham Young’s granddaughter who studied music and had a successful career in opera companies throughout Europe and the United States; Francis Haun a violinist studying under Leopold Licthenberg (1861-1935); and Marguerite Stewart a ballet student who studied at the Metropolitan Ballet. Additionally Teichert found herself meeting interesting new friends. As mentioned she accompanied Sid L. Hydeman to a party, a fellow Art Students League student, who later became successful as a magazine editor and graphic artist. Another student, Louise Waterman Wise, was the wife of the renowned Jewish rabbi Stephen Samuel Wise, Teichert wrote home to her mother retelling how the two women became fast friends while studying under Henri. Mrs. Wise invited Teichert to accompany to listen to her husband and others speak on woman’s suffrage.

It is during these years as an art student that Teichert developed the trademark style that would become the one she is known for today. Teichert responded to popular cultural practices and philosophies from her day. As Wardle demonstrates, her artwork reflects both the mural

63 Dennison, “Autobiography,” 204.
64 Dennison, “Autobiography,” 204.
65 See Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 2, folder 3, letter dated October 31, 1915
66 See Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 2, folder 3, letter dated October 31, 1915.
67 See Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 2, folder 3, letter dated October 31, 1915.
68 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 11.
movement to place artwork in America’s public spaces and the American pageantry movement. While Teichert studied in both Chicago and New York, she focused on beaux-arts mural painting. Its style and educational goals resonated with her. The beaux-arts style of figures spread across the picture plane in procession format, and a flattened composition that avoids depth by emphasizing the surface plane of the wall is easily recognizable in her paintings.

A prominent artistic goal for Teichert was that her art would educate viewers. This goal solidified during her formal art training. Teichert’s desire to educate through art connects to Beaux-Art compositional style. While studying in Chicago, Teichert attended a lecture given by Beaux Arts muralist Edwin Blashfield who taught, “The decoration in a building which belongs to the public must speak to people—to the man in the street. It must embody thought and significance, and that so plainly that he who runs may read.” Teichert so thoroughly adopted Blashfield’s words that if a message is vital to paint for the public the ideas can be conveyed through visual representation that she used the saying, “he who runs may read” as a constant mantra throughout her life.

Clear, honest and powerful communication through her artwork was Teichert’s goal. Through Robert Henri she felt a spiritual and artistic destiny to paint her Western pioneer heritage and stories of the people in the Bible and Book of Mormon. Not only did Henri inspire Teichert paint the subjects she held most dear to her, his association with the Ashcan School also influenced her subject matter. Similarly as the Ashcan School focused on the realism of ordinary

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69 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 11.
70 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 6-8.
71 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 6-7.
72 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 11.
73 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 8.
74 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 8.
75 Richard Oman and Susan Oman, “Minerva Kohlhepp Teichert: (1889-1976),” Special Collections, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, 10.
urban subjects Teichert’s female subjects focused on the domestic tasks of women and the importance of their societal role. In her narratives Teichert believed “there are only two reasons for painting in the first place, either a thing must be very beautiful or it must be an important story.”

Throughout her oeuvre of Western, Pioneer and Religious murals Teichert is conveying specific messages for her viewers. Deciphering her messages becomes essential to understanding what she paints.

77 Minerva Teichert, quoted in Oman, “Minerva Kohlhepp Teichert,” 10.
Women can be seen as the focal point in many of Teichert’s murals, especially in her religious images. One example is the story of the sisters Mary and Martha found in the Christian New Testament. In 1941 Teichert rendered the narrative in her painting *Jesus at the Home of Mary and Martha* (fig. #6). Examining the painting and reviewing the scriptural account allows for a close-up analysis of Teichert’s stylistic elements and an interpretation of what message she teaches her audience.

According to the account in the book of Luke Jesus visits the home of Mary and Martha. During the visit Mary is seated at Christ’s feet immersed in his teachings while Martha is in the background cooking the day’s meal. The narrative tells of Martha’s frustration because she “was cumbered about with much serving” and then sincerely asks Christ, “Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?” Jesus responds by stating, “Martha, Martha thou are careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her.”

A general synopsis of the story illustrates the importance of making choices. Followers of Christ are faced with the question which is more important; spiritual nourishment or physical

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78 Minerva Teichert, quoted in John W. Welch and Doris R. Dant, quoted from *The Book of Mormon Painting of Minerva Teichert*, (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft and Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1997), 15.

hunger. The overall message teaches that it is important to learn how to balance our appetites as much as our time. It is also an example of societal pressures women face each day.

The narrator begins the story inside the women’s home. There is no mention of whether Christ’s visit was planned or an impromptu one. If the latter, the reader can understand Martha’s frustration. Martha is left to single-handedly prepare the guest’s meal. Had the two women known about the visit beforehand they would have divided the workload equitably, working together so they could both eventually sit at Jesus’ feet to hear His teaching.

Teichert’s painting *Jesus at the Home of Mary and Martha* (fig. #6) retells the biblical story by focusing on all three figures in the story. The narrative makes Mary the preferred choice while diminishing Martha’s choice to serve Jesus. Teichert re-envisions the story by transforming the narrative into one of female equality by conveying the importance of both choices—the domestic and the educational—made between the two sisters in the composition. Mary is seated in the center. To the left is a humanized loving Christ dressed in white, while Martha is depicted standing in earth tones at the right in the background. Christ’s pointing hand gesture guides the reading and Mary’s bright red robe signifies to the viewer that Mary and Christ teaching lie at the center of the work; the teaching message seems to be the focal point.\(^{80}\)

The overall composition embodies Teichert’s religious art production and trademark stylistic elements. Her murals reflect the Beaux-Art compositional style, which spreads figures across the picture plane, avoiding depth with a flattened composition.\(^ {81}\) This particular painting refers to Teichert’s education at the Art League of New York.\(^ {82}\) During her time as a student in New York, Teichert was given permission from the Metropolitan Museum of Art to copy the French painter, Leon-Augustin Lhermitte’s *Among the Humble* (fig. 7). Comparing the two

\(^{80}\) Wardle, *Pageant in Paint*, 94.
\(^{82}\) Wardle, *Pageants in Paint*, 80.
paintings, Wardle detects similarities such as loose brush strokes and stage like setting that Teichert uses throughout her art career.\textsuperscript{83} The Christ figure in both paintings is a kind and loving Savior. Each composition portrays a humble domestic interior with an arched frame at the top of the composition.\textsuperscript{84} The setting, as Wardle describes it, is a “tableau vivant” or “popular form of entertainment in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in which costumed figures frozen in place imitated well-known scenes” making it appear that the figures are poised for a stage representation of the biblical story.\textsuperscript{85} The setting is intended to be a stage on which Teichert can articulate her interpretation of the story.

Interpreting narratives as an educational tool through artwork, as mentioned above, appealed to Teichert. She was drawn to the notion that mural decoration in a public setting was deemed, at the time she was studying art, as the highest form of art. Talented artists can convey a message to the public through artwork in order for the viewer to learn without much effort.\textsuperscript{86} One of her motivations in painting religious images was the opportunity to teach biblical accounts by illustrating the important characters and their message. Her interpretation is uncovered when studying what elements she includes.

When looking at the composition of Jesus at the Home of Mary and Martha as a whole, each figure seems to occupy an equal amount of space. Mary dressed in red at the center becomes the focal point in the composition, as Christ’s brilliant white robe illuminates the space with his divine presence making his figure larger in relation to the two women, as his light highlights them both.\textsuperscript{87} Although the figures of Christ and Mary sit on stools of different heights,

\textsuperscript{83} Wardle, \textit{Pageant in Paint}, 80.
\textsuperscript{84} Wardle, \textit{Pageant in Paint}, 80.
\textsuperscript{85} Wardle, \textit{Pageant in Paint}, 94.
\textsuperscript{86} Marian Wardle, “That He Who Runs May Read,” \textit{The Book of Mormon Paintings of Minerva Teichert}, (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft and Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1997), 32.
\textsuperscript{87} Wardle, \textit{Pageants in Paint}, 94.
it almost appears as if Mary were to pose erectly she would be at the same level with Christ.

Martha is seen standing dressed in stripes drawing the eye upward towards her face and lengthening her body to give her an equally strong stature. Mary’s brightly colored robe draws the viewer’s attention to the center of the painting, but the “V” created by the poses of each figure along with their gazes creates a diagonal leading towards the scroll and then outwards again into the background, drawing Martha into the narrative. Behind Martha, Teichert inserts another burst of red with the blazing fire, suggesting she is purposefully drawing viewers to something important at the right side of the painting. Fundamentally, each figure bears an equal visual weight: standing versus seated, brilliant colors versus the striped pattern and a very shallow pictorial space to include them all. Teichert thereby engages each figure as having a vital role within the narrative.

Teichert also identifies important elements in her narrative by the degree of detail she chooses to insert for particular objects. When asked about her impressionistic brushstrokes in her paintings she replied, “When the story is told, the picture is finished.” And while teaching her art assistant she cautioned him, “Don’t get so excited about doing a tremendous technical job of talking about nothing.” Teichert is done when her interpretation of the story is revealed or the most essential elements are represented. With this in mind, an assumption can be made about the level of detail Teichert adds or subtracts in this work. Closely identifying objects in the artwork can help determine whether an object or figure is primary or secondary in her narrative. Her primary elements stand out with clear details, whereas the secondary ones are executed as if they are meant to be blurred away from the key aspects within her setting.

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88 Minerva Teichert quoted in John W. Welch and Doris R. Dant, quoted from The Book of Mormon Paintings of Minerva Teichert, (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft and Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1997), 15.
Indistinct secondary elements appear in the background of the painting. Behind Christ there is a roughly rendered broom identified by the dark lines the shadow casts from the light source. There are swirls of color on the wall above Mary merely suggesting plates or other dinnerware up on a shelf. For the purpose of highlighting Martha, on the table, pots are rendered with greater detail even though they are placed further into the background. This suggests their importance since the objects are connected to Martha and her task of preparing dinner.

In Christian theology and the biblical narrative Mary is heralded as the heroine in this story. Teichert does not question this, she acknowledges the narrative that “Mary hath chosen good part, which shall not be taken away from her”\(^{90}\) by Christ’s pointing finger towards Mary and Mary centered in the composition wearing the red robe. In like manner, Teichert asserts Martha’s equality in the narrative by her painting composition and technique, as indicated above, allowing the perceptive viewer to read the ways in which Martha plays a meaningful role in the story even though she is painted in the background—but not too far. Martha supported Mary by choosing to serve Jesus, freeing Mary from her domestic chores allowing her time to sit learning from Him. Teichert celebrates Mary as the heroine, yet she shows greater compassion for and interest in Martha in her supportive role. From Christ’s white robe reflecting towards Martha to her standing position with the vertical pattern in her dress moving the eye upward to the degree of facial detail similar to that rendered on the two foreground figures, to the arched architectural frame creating a circular flow within the composition, Martha remains undiminished. Teichert draws Martha into the narrative as a significant character who should be remembered. Teichert’s message is as much about Martha as it is about Mary. Teichert elucidates two additional reasons why Martha is a vital character in the story. The story is first, an example of the age-old

collective efforts of female networks and second, about the choices women face each day as they balance their societal and familial roles.
A TRIBUTE TO HER SUPPORTERS

“Try to balance all these things; housekeeping, economy, some toil, some pleasure, conversation with all kinds of honorable people. But most of all human sympathies and loving kindness and faith in the Lord.”

~Minerva Teichert

Teichert reimagines the traditional interpretation of the story by teaching both women’s point of view. The narrative states Martha is “cumbered” with kitchen chores, the story also discloses that because Martha is busily prepping for the meal, it gives Mary the opportunity to sit at Christ’s feet and listen to His teachings. Christian doctrine teaches that followers of Christ are asked to both serve and learn from the Master.92 The women exhibit two different skillsets. This episode shows that both Mary and Martha are doing what is asked of them; one is serving Christ while the other is being taught, it suggests that if both women are obedient, together they could be a perfect follower. Each woman demonstrates her personal skill by the choices they individually make. Mary is seated listening intently to Christ, while Martha is in the background serving Him. Relying on the other’s strongest asset, together they create an ideal partnership. The story exhibits a reoccurring gender phenomenon of how women throughout the ages have relied upon companions of their gender for support.

Teichert’s consideration for Martha may stem from her personal experience and her appreciation for the supportive women who surrounded her during her lifetime. As an artist, Teichert is the heroine and the individual who is remembered through her artwork. Because of

92 Matthew 25:40 (Revised Standard Version) In the parable of the sheep and goats, Jesus teaches about the importance of serving others and how the parable translates into serving.
her prolific career, features of her composition, style, and subjects are easily recognized in paintings still hanging in public venues, museums, churches and LDS temples throughout the country. However, close observation of her life and art career uncovers supportive individuals who have been lost to history, women who worked behind the scenes unnoticed in the shadows, ensuring her lifelong dream to become an artist was achieved. In studying her biography, art education, and in retracing her art production throughout her career it becomes apparent, that in the case of Minerva Teichert, a supportive network of women was one of the keys to her success.

Immediately after Teichert returned to Idaho, she was faced with repaying the financial debts she incurred while at school. Teichert stated, “How to pay that money back to my family was a puzzle.”93 What is not included in this statement is the fact that Teichert’s sister worked full-time as a typist to support the artist.94 Her sister sent her entire paycheck to Teichert while she studied in New York.95 Teichert continually writes home during her time as student thanking her family for their support. One letter reads, “The money came just in time to save me. I will not get a coat out of it as I need $8 for tuition in composition class.”96 Teichert’s biography reveals that while capable of earning money to support herself through her education, she nonetheless found herself needing help and her family, chiefly her sister, came to her rescue.

Once Teichert relocated to Pocatello, Idaho after living in New York, she benefitted from the support of three female art representatives; a patron, gallery owner and hotel manager. Four general phases can be identified in her art production: Phase One (1916-1928), Phase Two (1930-1948), Phase Three (1948-1954) and Phase Four (1954-1968)(see appendices on pages 60-61). During three of the four phases Teichert worked with women art representatives and in

94 Wardle, interviewed by Tina Delis, September 22, 2014.
95 Wardle, interviewed by Tina Delis, September 22, 2014.
96 Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 2, folder 3, letter dated October 31, 1915.
Phase 3 she lacked any representation. Scholars argue that Teichert painted over 400 canvases, but since all objects cannot be traced, I use the timeline chronicling the 133 objects documented in Wardle’s book as a basis for analysis of what relevant conclusions can be extrapolated. Reviewing the market trend during Teichert’s career alongside these phases reveals how she benefited from women working on her behalf while demonstrating the shifts in the subjects of her production.

The first of these art reps was Dr. Minnie Howard. Teichert described her as a loyal friend who “came to the rescue.” Between 1916 and 1917, Howard allowed Teichert to set up a studio in her home and secured sittings in which Teichert painted portraits to pay off the debts from her tuition and living expenses. The portraits were sold at an average price of twenty-five dollars. Howard also commissioned Teichert to paint a nine-piece Idaho landscape frieze in her dining room from 1918-1920. From this time until the 1930’s Teichert painted mostly portraits and landscapes and focused her time on raising her family and assisting with managing her family ranch. Of the objects sold, mostly private consumers purchased the artwork.

From 1930 to 1948, Teichert’s most productive painting years, Alice Merrill Horne managed the sale of Teichert’s painting. The timeline shows that almost half her works were produced during these years (table 1). Horne managed the sale of seventy-one paintings. I have categorized the paintings she brokered into five categories; Portraits, Landscapes, Western subjects, Pioneers, and Religious art. The breakdown of paintings sold by category are as

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100 Wardle, *Pageants in Paint*, 185.
follows: Portraits 6 percent, Landscapes 7 percent, Western subjects 30 percent, Pioneers 25 percent and Religious works 32 percent. These paintings were purchased for both public and private buildings. The public spaces included hotels and schools and church buildings as private institutions. Both public and private buildings were predominantly in Utah and Idaho.

After Horne’s death in 1948, Teichert was without representation until 1954 (table 2). During this period 3 percent were portraits, 2 percent miscellaneous/landscapes, 11 percent Western themed, six percent Pioneers and 77 percent Religious murals. The high percentage of Religious paintings can be accounted for because during this period Teichert focused on her Book of Mormon murals. Additionally, two of the Western paintings, Squaws and Bucks, were painted in honor of Horne.

In 1954, Edith Murrell began selling paintings on behalf of Teichert (table 3). During these years 76 percent of her paintings had Western themes, 18 percent were Religious subjects and 6 percent Miscellaneous/Landscapes. Murrell assisted with managing the Connor Hotel in Laramie, Wyoming and sold most of the art to consumers located in Wyoming, Colorado and Texas.

These figures reveal fundamental facts about Teichert’s art production and sales. During the years Horne was assisting Teichert with the sale of her artwork there is a relatively equal distribution between the various themes of Western, Pioneer and Religious paintings. These objects were sold to consumers in the Utah, Idaho and Wyoming areas. By contrast, while Murrell was selling Teichert’s artwork, the patrons and themes are mostly focused on Western subjects and non-religious venues outside her niche market of Utah. Although there is not much information about the earlier period of production and sales, from Teichert’s autobiography, her

105 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 192-193.
106 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 193-195.
patrons were private individuals and her priority for painting was to pay off her tuition debts. It seems that overall, each of the three art representatives, Howard, Horne and Murrell sold Teichert’s objects where their personal connections ensured success for the artist.

Furthermore the data confirms how Teichert benefitted financially when she followed the art market and the recommendations of her marketing agents. Phase three substantiates the theory that there is discrepancy between what Teichert wanted to paint versus what the art market directed her to paint. The fact that 77 percent of her subjects between the years 1948-1954 were her forty-two *Book of Mormon* murals and these murals were neither commissioned nor sold is an indication that Teichert needed assistance from her representatives. Teichert chose to paint the Book of Mormon subjects without any recommendation. She wanted to paint the subject from as early as 1915 while she was a student in Kenneth Hayes Miller’s (1876-1952) mural-decoration course where she painted her mural titled *Samuel the Lamanite.* At that time and later she openly expressed her hope to paint the Mormon story—both its history and Book of Mormon—for public audiences. After returning to Idaho, it was not until 1935 while working with Horne that Teichert attempted again to paint the preferred subject. Correspondence between Teichert and Horne uncovers how Horne counseled against it and encouraged the artist to paint subjects that would benefit her career. Horne guided her, stating, “After you done six more of trappers [sic] and Indians of Utah & Western early life will be time [sic] to think of Book of Mormon—that must come but don’t [sic] break in until you have reached a certain facility you are surely acquiring, that would mean defeat.” Teichert attempted again to paint Book of Mormon subjects less than two years later. Again, Horne cautiously counseled her about her images and

110 Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 4, folder 10, letter dated May 16, 1935.
nothing moved forward.⁹¹¹ It was not until after Horne’s death that Teichert made any significant progress on the Mormon story. She took oil sketches to LDS Church authorities in hopes to get her project funded.⁹¹² Disappointed from being denied, she purchased canvases and proceeded to paint the images without financial backing.⁹¹³ After attempting to sell her murals without success, Teichert in the end donated them to Brigham Young University. She wrote her family regretfully, “I couldn’t do anything about ‘Book of Mormon’ so I turned it over to the church [sic]…I was glad to be free from it.”⁹¹⁴

Painting portraits was the most efficient way to make income to repay her debts under Dr. Howard. Then while Horne guided Teichert’s career and she followed her advice, her art production flourished. This is evident by the lack of sales during the third phase while Teichert was without any representation and her painting the Book of Mormon murals that were donated at the end of her career.⁹¹⁵ This fact illuminates a disparity between what Teichert wanted to paint versus what art she sold. In the end, it appears the art market controlled which of Teichert’s pieces were bought by who sold them and Teichert was unable to gauge what subjects were profitable.⁹¹⁶

Comparing what subjects Teichert paints for Horne and Murrell’s clients exposes this evidence. Horne unmistakably understood the art market of the time and her political connections in Utah and Idaho ensured that Teichert’s art sold to patrons who commissioned

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⁹¹¹ Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 4 folder 11, letter dated January 26, 1937.
⁹¹⁶ Marian Wardle, interviewed by Tina Delis, September 22, 2014.
mural for state buildings and academic venues. Her religious affiliations also ensured her artwork was placed in ecclesiastical structures. Murrell, conversely sold mainly Western themed objects to buyers from Wyoming and Texas. Alternatively, while Teichert is without representation she paints what is her choice subject, Book of Mormon murals. Not only was she unable to sell them after much personal effort seeking audiences with LDS Church officials and Brigham Young University administrators, she donates them as the last act of her artistic career.\textsuperscript{117} Teichert found success because of the women who worked on her behalf and when she painted what the current market demanded.

Teichert’s relationship with Alice Merrill Horne, during her most prolific years of art production, turned into an ideal partnership in Utah’s art world. When discussing women who contributed to the Rocky Mountain art production, Doss describes Horne as an “independent Western woman” because of the significant contribution she made to Utah’s art community.\textsuperscript{118}

Listing Horne’s accomplishments gives insight into how her support influenced Teichert’s career. Two years after Utah became a state, Horne was the second woman elected as a state representative.\textsuperscript{119} In 1899, Horne composed, proposed and lobbied for an Art Bill that made Utah the first state in the Union to provide a state institution for the encouragement of the arts. Raised as member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, she became a board member of their women’s organization, The Relief Society from 1902-1916.\textsuperscript{120} In 1904, as a Utah delegate she gave two addresses to the International Congress of Women held in Berlin.

\textsuperscript{117} Minerva Teichert to Agnes and Clara, June 11, 1970, in Letters of Minerva Teichert, ed. Eastwood, 220, see Wardle, “That He Who Runs,” 32.
\textsuperscript{118} Doss, “I Must Paint,” 216.
\textsuperscript{120} Arrington, “Alice Merrill Horne,” 272, see Doss, “I Must Paint,” 216.
Germany discussing the progress of women in politics. Horne was on the founding committee of women of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers and held positions of both its first secretary and second president. Utah proudly notes her as the first women to be elected chairman of the Democratic Party in Salt Lake County. She served as historian and state regent of the Utah Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. After the death of her son from sanitation issues, she became one of the leading figures in the development and operation of the clean milk depots” in Salt Lake City. In 1900 she was one of the three legislators to sponsor the relocation of the University of Utah to its present site in Salt Lake City, Utah. All the while she was a wife and raising six children.

Horne’s childhood created opportunities that allowed her to be surrounded by some Utah’s most prominent individuals. She was born on January 2, 1868 in a log cabin in Fillmore, Utah. Daughter of Clarence Merrill and Bathsheba Smith, Horne was the third daughter, fourth child of fourteen children. Her father had three wives, Horne’s mother the first. Because of the plural marriage, Horne’s father was not a dominant figure in her life; instead, like Teichert, she was influenced by strong women during her formative years. At the age of seven her maternal grandfather, George A. Smith, died leaving Bathsheba W.B. Smith, her maternal

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123 Black, “Alice Merrill Horne,” 137.
124 Harriet Horne Arrington, “Alice Merrill Horne, Art Promoter and Early Utah Legislator,” Utah Historical Quarterly vol. 58, no. 3 (Summer 1990), 275.
grandmother alone. Horne was invited to move to Salt Lake City and live with her, which she did on a more or less permanent basis, only to return to her family home each summer.  

Living with her grandmother launched Horne into social circles that formulated connections that lasted her lifetime. Her grandfather, George A. Smith, was a cousin to the first prophet of the LDS church, Joseph Smith. George A. Smith was one of the early colonizers of the Church, an apostle of the Church, a Church Historian, first counselor and close associate of Brigham Young, second prophet of the Church. Horne’s grandmother, Bathsheba, was a good friend of Emma and Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, Illinois. She was one of the original members of eighteen women who organized the women’s organization The Relief Society in Nauvoo. After moving to Salt Lake City, she made the motion that led to the legislative proposal that granted women the right to vote in Utah.  

Bathsheba held numerous positions of leadership throughout her life. She was one of the Relief Society’s general board president, board member, a board member of the Deseret Hospital Association and matron of the Salt Lake Temple.  

As an active member of the women’s organization of the Church, Bathsheba’s home was a meeting place for many important women of the day who were influential in areas of political, ecclesiastical, civic, and educational affairs, including the cultural spheres of literature, visual and performing arts. Horne, coming from a rural background in central Utah, flourished under this exposure and quickly learned from her grandmother’s example how to be a leader in the community.  

In addition to interacting with influential women, Bathsheba’s love for art made a significant impact on Horne. Bathsheba studied painting in Nauvoo, Illinois. She painted

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129 Arrington, “Cultural Entrepreneur,” 123.  
130 Arrington, “Alice Merrill Horne,” 263.  
131 Arrington, “Cultural Entrepreneur,” 123.  
portraits, landscapes, still life and children. Using this love for art she instructed Horne and instilled a love of art that endured for the remainder of her life. At different stages in her life, Horne studied under some of Utah’s best artists, including George M. Ottinger (1883-1917) a teacher at the University of Deseret. J.T. Harwood (1860-1940) shortly after his return from studying in Paris, France at the Julian and Beaux Art Academies. Mary Teasdel (1863-1937) who was a student of James McNeil Whistler (1834-1903) and John Hafen (1857-1910). Horne’s political career suggests that although she had extensive art training she may have realized her art skill was not comparable to that of other artists and she chose instead to focus her leadership strengths on promoting art and on her ability to judge art’s quality.

Horne’s lobbying skills benefited the artists she represented, especially Teichert. Horne’s connections with influential LDS Church leaders and government officials allowed her to bridge relationships between artists and patrons. Horne’s main priority was assisting with the success of the artists she represented. Biographers note that although Horne was deeply connected and involved in civic activities, her “deepest sympathies were always with the artist. Her goal was to sustain the artists’ talents until they were financially rewarded by purchases of their artworks.”

Horne spent time educating the public about purchasing art, believing that there was “only one thing bigger than pictures—that is the artists who make them. They cannot paint if they cannot eat.” Teichert knew this personally.

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133 Arrington, “Cultural Entrepreneur,” 128.
134 Arrington, “Cultural Entrepreneur,” 133.
135 Widstoe, “Gifted Lady, 153, see Arrington, “Cultural Entrepreneur,” 133.
136 Widstoe, “Gifted Lady, 153, see Arrington, “Cultural Entrepreneur,” 133.
Horne took on Teichert as client in 1931 the moment she unrolled her canvases on her living room floor. Their working relationship turned into a lifelong friendship. These women both benefitted from one another’s strengths. Horne’s investment in the art community, her savvy business skills and lobbying skills with influential individuals allowed her the to focus on the pragmatic side of the art market, while Teichert’s artistic skill made Horne’s marketing job an easy one.

Once Teichert was a client, Horne began to educate her about selling art and the art market. Horne immediately recognized Teichert needed to see herself as a professional artist, an artist worthy of being paid an amount reflecting her skill. More importantly, Horne identified Teichert’s need to provide for her family. In a correspondence to Teichert, Horne wrote, “Dear Minerva, you must let me put the prices on your pictures. I do not add commission to your price, you must make your price include my commission so that if you sell and I sell they must be the same.” Continuing she states, “do one thing for me not discuss our business—prices & such things with your friends—alright to talk it over with your husband. It would do us both damage...Nothing damages so much as to give a picture away, it is unprofessional, to give the Ward would be splendid thing but you must not give everything.[sic] You have yourself and the children to provide for.” A few months later, Horne responds to a letter written by Teichert that informed her concerning the mortgage on the family ranch. “Of course dear heart, nothing stirs me so as your danger of losing your old home...Do this for me, send the man’s name who has your mortgage and I will get some influential people to see him and see if something can be

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139 Marion Wardle, interviewed by Tina Delis, September 22, 2014.
140 See Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 4, folder 10, letter dated September 3, 1931.
141 See Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 4, folder 10, letter dated September 3, 1931.
done.” With Horne’s negotiation, she arranged with the bank to settle the mortgage by selling paintings in lieu of payment.

Horne also served as an art consultant critiquing Teichert’s artwork. In a letter Horne discussed *Washakie’s Wedding* (fig. 8). Horne suggested the picture could include young children, maybe one child holding the horse for the bride or groom. She continued by relating a personal experience she had with Indians by writing, “I used to have several squaws visit me with their children. They were all so pretty. It seems odd to see such small braids of hair, the Indians I knew both men and women when I was child had long thick braids, some down below their waists and always beads and colored things in their braids.” Comparing the actual mural with a preliminary study (fig. 9) indicates Teichert heeded Horne’s advice. An additional young girl and young boy hold the reins for the wedding couple. All the adult Indians have long thick braids adorned with colored binding.

The lobbying skills Horne perfected while in politics also aided in promoting Teichert. One example of working with prominent Church leaders exemplifies Horne’s marketing flair. Horne went to the LDS Church office building to sell one of Teichert’s pioneer murals. She was immediately turned down because no singular auxiliary had enough funds in their department’s budget to purchase the mural. Horne persisted, going to auxiliary heads in several organizations; the Relief Society, the Primary Organization, the Mutual, the Presiding Bishopric and George A. Smith. While sympathizing with each department head about budget constraints, she asked each

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142 See Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 4, folder 10, letter dated February 29, 1932.
143 See Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 4, folder 10, letter dated October 11, 1932.
144 See Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 4, folder 10, letter dated February 26. 1935.
145 See Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 4, folder 10, letter dated February 26. 1935.
if they would be willing to pay a portion of the full amount if other departments were willing to contribute a portion too. After consulting with all five, she negotiated each organization would donate an hundred dollars to pay the full cost of five hundred dollars.\footnote{See Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 4, folder 10, letter dated May 7, 1932.}

Horne also aided Teichert in setting up a tuition fund at Brigham Young University for Teichert’s son, and for all future students—another example of the helpful representative. Teichert is credited with setting up a tuition scholarship fund for her son and future students at the university, yet Horne demonstrates how she helped alleviate Teichert from the business end of the art market. In November 1935 Horne wrote to Teichert as a follow up to her visit to Brigham Young University. Excitedly she explained to Minerva “all is settled, and in a few days…will take the two murals to B.Y.U. President Harris wrote again that he would post the 800 at your credit and would check off the first year’s work for Richard…Aren’t we glad to do this for the children? This I hope will prove a blessing to us all.”\footnote{See Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 4, folder 10, letter dated November, 1935.} This note suggests that although Teichert was generously donating paintings to the university, it was Horne who took care of the financial and organizational details. She corresponded with Harris, the university president and made arrangements to deliver the murals and all without accepting any commission.\footnote{See Minerva Teichert Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Box 4, folder 10, letter dated November, 1935.} Their teamwork is an illustration of how the two balanced their strengths. While Horne tended to the business Teichert had more time to paint.

Teichert’s biography shows that, like Mary, she had many Martha’s in the background of her life willing to offer practical support. The “Marthas” came from the supportive sisterhood that influenced her career. That career reveals the vital role her art representatives, especially
Horne, played in marketing her work. Without her mother and sister’s assistance her education would have been significantly more difficult. Teichert understood what it meant for Martha to support Mary. Teichert then paid an artistic tribute to Martha’s supporting role in her painting. By rendering a more egalitarian relationship between the two sisters and between the domestic versus the intellectual in the mural, Teichert acknowledged Martha’s valuable role and gives tribute to her. Mary received her rightful place as the heroine, yet the elevation of Martha educates viewers about the importance of daily domestic life.
ELEVATING ORDINARY AS EXTRAORDINARY

“The world has no significance other than people, and that’s what it was created for...that’s the story of the world room, it is a ‘people room.’”

~Minerva Teichert

Because of Teichert’s own experience, the strong-minded women in her extended family and ties to women like Alice Merrill Horne, she recognized women as an essential part of history. Women are rendered as dominant figures in many of her historical and religious works. Her daughter, Laurie Teichert Eastwood, wrote, “She empathized with women’s situations and dignified their roles and mundane tasks.” Teichert even painted her own chores in murals such as Wash Day, Gathering Vegetables, Quilting and Drawing Water.

Moreover, Teichert also would have understood the compromises these women made in their own lives in order to assist her. Teichert knew what life was like as pioneer women and what they sacrificed because of her grandmother’s life. Her mother took time from her family to help the women of Idaho. There were the supportive women who surrounded her while she was studying art and during her career. Her sister generously worked full-time and sent her entire paycheck to ensure Teichert could study art. Her three art representatives marketed her art while balancing careers and families. Dr. Minnie Howard had a medical practice while being a wife and mother. Edith Murrell assisted the management of a hotel and sold art. Alice Merrill Horne was an influential politician, art dealer and while she raised her large family. Teichert similarly

balanced her life on the family ranch, and her parenthood with her painting. In an interview with Teichert’s son, Robert Teichert, he recalled Teichert balancing her daily hours between the different roles by stating, “She painted at home to try to keep it from interfering with family life. She thought her family was more important than painting—but they were close rivals.”154

Robert’s insight is revealing about the choices Teichert made. The story of Mary and Martha is an example of the choices women face each day, choosing what to prioritize and where to put their effort.

Teichert teaches Martha’s ordinary domestic chores are as important as Mary studying the scriptures, an homage perhaps to the women who supported her, particularly, her own sister’s early support of the artist’s study. Teichert was a devoted student of the scriptures.155 When preparing to paint her religious murals Teichert believed that scriptures were a critical component to their success.156 When asked about her artistic process she stated, “Most I have ever done has been thro [sic] faith, prayer and study.”157 She would have known the other story about Martha that reveals her faith to be as strong as Mary’s. When Mary and Martha’s brother Lazarus died they heard Jesus was at a nearby town. It was Martha who ran to find to Jesus. The narrative in the book of John reads, “Then Martha as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.”158 Martha after finding Jesus says, “Lord if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” Mary does not leave to meet Jesus until Martha goes back to their home to tell her.159 Both sisters meet Jesus at Lazarus’ grave. Jesus speaking directly to Martha saying, “…Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead.” Then the

159 John 11:28 (Revised Standard Version).
story continues as Jesus performs the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. “…And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth…”\textsuperscript{160} Studying the scriptures Teichert would have understood that the story of Jesus visiting the home of Mary and Martha does not question Martha’s faith, but rather demonstrates the choice she made that day to take action around the domestic sphere and serve Jesus.

Women face pressures each day that require them to balance the challenges arising between their family life, their career and their domestic tasks. Teichert believed in rejoicing over womanhood.\textsuperscript{161} Martha’s depiction can be viewed as a celebration of womanhood and the many roles they choose from each day. In her Mary and Martha mural Teichert represents both sides of the narrative equally. The ordinary domestic life is just as important to Teichert and how she renders Martha elevates all aspects of womanhood.

Teichert thus celebrates the ordinary roles of womanhood by stressing their significance in her compositions.\textsuperscript{162} As mentioned above, scholars have argued that Teichert acknowledged women’s contributions in settling the Western frontier in her murals by inserting them as a focal point in the narrative.\textsuperscript{163} Heroism for Teichert included performing daily tasks without which society could not function. Teichert elevates the ordinary as extraordinary. By recognizing a women’s domestic life Teichert demonstrates that the ordinary roles of women should be appreciated and not forgotten.

Teichert’s Manti World Room murals also stress the significance of the ordinary. Teichert is renowned in the LDS community as the first woman commissioned to paint murals inside a temple. Teichert’s idea for the world room differed from the traditional representations

\textsuperscript{160} John 11:43–44 (Revised Standard Version).
\textsuperscript{162} Oman, “Minerva Kohlhepp Teichert,” 11.
\textsuperscript{163} Oman, “Minerva Kohlhepp Teichert,” 11.
of vegetation and animals, in her choice to focus the iconography on people. She believed, “the world has no significance other than people, and that’s what it was created for…that’s the story of the world room, it is a ‘people room.’” Concentrating on people permitted Teichert the opportunity to tell, what she described as “the story of the world.” At fifty-nine years old and a grandmother, Teichert painted a four walled space measuring 28’ high, 50’ long and 25’ wide. The East Wall represents a building of a kingdom while the North Wall depicts a procession through time. Both walls interweave historical and scriptural events that exemplify how Teichert emphasizes ordinary people.

The East Wall, as the entrance into the room is two stories high and depicts the building of the Tower of Babel as it is being constructed in the Plain of Shinar. The tower is painted in the form of a ziggurat and represented as a great “observatory.” Teichert connects the theme of observing with the idea of representing learning and renders all male figures constructing the tower. She uses the figures to represent how the city was built. Eight different pairs of men are pulling wagons full of stones and supplies. Men are raking, designing and measuring. It has been argued that the people and tools Teichert incorporates on this wall create a concentrated effort to show a “birth of cooperation” or a unification of a group of people. The cooperating figures are not recognizable individuals from the scriptures or history. Instead Teichert portrays the slaves who constructed the tower. She demonstrates how the tower was constructed by the backbreaking effort and sweat of nameless slaves by portraying the harsh realities of slavery. She

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166 Dant, “Minerva Teichert’s Manti Temple Murals,” 9. Although much of the visual analysis is cited from Doris R. Dant’s article, I also incorporate my notes from viewing the murals in person with special permission from the Manti Temple president on June 17, 2014.
shows, for example, rolling wagons strenuously pulled by eight pairs of male figures and two men carrying heavy bags on their backs.\textsuperscript{171}

The most well known mural in the room, \textit{The Procession} portrayed on the North Wall has three levels to the imagery. It includes background architecture, a procession of wealthy and royal individuals and a foreground depiction of individuals in shadow. The mural represents a timeline and progresses from right to left, from east to west and from the earliest period to a more recent one.\textsuperscript{172} The architecture begins with the Middle Eastern domes to medieval castles to the ship of Columbus.\textsuperscript{173} The procession begins with figures from Asian descent then transitions to armored European crusaders on horseback to Columbus waving farewell to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.\textsuperscript{174} The foreground is painted in deep tones of violet and dark blue depicting figures with little or no detail. These relatively indistinct shapes of figures include a blind woman, a fatherless homeless family, a mother with her lame son, and another mother cradling her son’s limp body in her arms. The majority of the wealthy and royal figures walking in the procession ignore the figures in the foreground. Only one figure, a king, drops a few coins towards a young woman, yet he does not look at her.\textsuperscript{175} Teichert identified these figures as “huddled masses—the halt, the blind, the ‘beggars from many causes’—all going unheeded.”\textsuperscript{176} The helpless victims are women, and she brings attention to the fact that women’s needs go unheeded. Teichert paints these figures to emphasize she wants a viewer’s attention drawn to these faceless individuals; they must be neither ignored nor unnoticed. When viewers come into the room and sit, these figures are at eye level to the viewers. They are also proportionately

\textsuperscript{171} Dant, “Minerva Teichert’s Manti Temple Murals,” 18.
\textsuperscript{172} Dant, “Minerva Teichert’s Manti Temple Murals,” 21.
\textsuperscript{173} Dant, “Minerva Teichert’s Manti Temple Murals,” 23.
\textsuperscript{174} Dant, “Minerva Teichert’s Manti Temple Murals,” 23.
\textsuperscript{175} Dant, “Minerva Teichert’s Manti Temple Murals,” 23.
\textsuperscript{176} Minerva Teichert, quoted in Dant, “Minerva Teichert’s Manti Temple Murals,” 23.
larger than the figures in the procession because they are in the foreground. Although the viewer only sees shadowed versions of the figures, Teichert brings attention to them by highlighting their outlines with a bright white.

Teichert subtly transformed the narrative in these two murals away from the historically famous to the ordinary people who tend to be excluded from history. Although Teichert viewed the experience of painting the World Room murals as a culmination of her career and an “artistic and religious pinnacle” 177 she felt the disappointment of being passed over by those who instead commissioned male artists. 178 When Teichert’s World Room murals are discussed commentators rarely mention she was denied opportunities to paint in several temples before being allowed to paint in the Manti temple. In the 1940’s Teichert was commissioned to paint a mural in the Idaho Falls Temple. Unfortunately before she began the project she was informed that only priesthood holders, who in the LDS church are exclusively male, were permitted to paint within the temples. 179 A few years later when the Switzerland and Los Angeles temples were in the planning stages she was again disappointed at not being selected as one of the muralists. 180 It was not until the Manti Temple was being refurbished and she presented a new original concept for the World Room that she received the commission. 181 Considering that Teichert renders the “beggars from many causes” as women and that the “story of the world” is about people, or the slaves without whom ancient cities could not have been constructed, Teichert asserts how essential ordinary citizens are to the world. The East Wall depicts the slaves who built the tower and their backbreaking effort. The North Wall, shows helpless women being ignored by brightly painted procession of more privileged figures. Moreover, she challenges the patriarchal religion

178 Wardle, Pageants in Paint, 14.
by making these women in shadows the stronger focal point on the North Wall. In a space where she was passed over not because of her artistic skill, but because of her gender, she instructs viewers to remember women.

Teichert believed that if a story was important enough, it was worth painting. She challenged the overly masculine cast in her Western images like Zion Ho! (Handcart Pioneers) (fig. 5) and Washday on the Plains (fig. 1). In Zion Ho! she rendered a woman with superhuman strength as the focal point in the composition and connected her to the pioneer heritage with her hand firmly holding the handcart. And Teichert raised respect for the domestic chores in her painting of Washday on the Plains creating heroines by painting women doing laundry while crossing the plains.

In her painting, Jesus at the home of Mary and Martha, (fig. 6) Teichert reimagines the narrative of Mary and Martha by illuminating both sides of the story, teaching viewers that the story is not just one sided and only about faith. She ensures Martha receives as much respect as Mary because of her choice to focus on ordinary chores and that her supportive role should not be slighted in history. Martha in her earth-toned coloring does not fade into the background as a secondary character. Instead Teichert renders her role as important as Mary’s.

As a highly educated woman for her day Teichert shaped a life she wanted and was a female artist who with immense conscious effort transformed the traditional narrative of the male dominated Western genre to a female’s point of view. Surrounded by strong-minded women she saw beyond the gender restrictions of her day and fashioned a life she enjoyed. Although her biography reveals she chose to live a traditional life as a wife, mother and homemaker she balanced the challenges that arose between her family, her career and domestic sphere. She is known today because of collective effort from a strong female network. Her art production shows she painted what was being sold in the art market, but it
did not prevent her from voicing her political and cultural beliefs in her murals. Teichert only painted what she felt was relevant in the story. The level of detail she includes or excludes allows viewers to better understand the most pertinent parts of her message. She empowered women by recognizing their participation in Western history and she reimaged the patriarchal religion by making women the heroine. She believed true heroism was the ordinary tasks society could not function without. What is more, she was respectful of the patriarchal structure of her religion, but still negotiated around the male dominated environment to convey assertive messages about women by elevating them and their domestic roles as a gender that should neither be ignored nor forgotten.
FIGURES

Figure 1 *Washday on the Plains*, Minerva Teichert, 1938, oil on canvas, 40 x 49 inches, Brigham Young University Museum of Art, Provo, Utah.
Figure 2 *Handcart Pioneers*,
Carl Christian Anton Christensen, 1900, oil on canvas, 24 x 37 inches, Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City, Utah.
Figure 3 *Madonna of 1847*, Minerva Teichert, 1936, oil on canvas, 72 x 132 inches, Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City, Utah.
Figure 4 First Plowing,
Minerva Teichert, 1935, oil on canvas, 45 x 68 inches, Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City, Utah.
Figure 5 *Zion Ho! (Handcart Pioneers)*, Minerva Teichert, 1940, oil on canvas, 68 x 51 inches, Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City, Utah.
Figure 6 Jesus at the Home of Mary and Martha, Minerva Teichert, 1941, oil on canvas, 46 x 70 inches, Brigham Young University Museum of Art, Provo, Utah.
Figure 7 Among the Humble,
Léon-Augustin Lhermitte, 1905, oil on canvas, 104 ¾ x 90 inches, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York.
Figure 8 *Washakie Wedding*, Minerva Teichert, 1935, oil on canvas, 77 x 125 inches, Brigham Young University Museum of Art, Provo, Utah.
Figure 9 Study of Washakie's Wedding,
Minerva Teichert, n.d., watercolor and gouache, 10 13/16 x 18 inches, Brigham Young University Museum of Art, Provo, Utah.
Figure 10 *The Pageant of History*, Minerva Teichert, Manti Temple World Room rendering, 1947, Watercolor and graphite on paper, 36 x 72 inches, Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City, Utah.
### Table 1

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Paintings
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BIOGRAPHY

Tina M. Delis received her Bachelor of Arts from George Mason University in 2008. She is a wife and mother of three living in Vienna, Virginia.